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SIMON WELLER: State of play at DBS

NIGEL GIBSON: Challenges ahead for freight on rail

JEREMY CORBYN: Labour should have listened to ASLEF

TOM WATSON: Cameron's attack on the unions

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It's your voice – please use it

IT IS ironic that the government, in the year of the anniversary of Magna Carta, announces a Trade Union Bill that will erode and destroy our basic freedoms which have evolved over centuries. The basic tenet is to damage the right to strike with thresholds for ballots far and beyond those required in elections; strictures on picketing; and new powers for the certification officer. We are asked why we do not have electronic voting; the bill enshrines postal voting to limit participation and increase the cost. The greatest hypocrisy is the greater thresholds for essential services, including transport, when in most cases the government is the employer. Double standards! We are determined to fight these bad laws. Because when has there been a strike against a good employer? Who hasn't hurt people, broken agreements, or bullied their staff?

We will always stand together for the collective good. As highlighted by the unity shown on the Tube and in other recent and successful ballots. And what a speech in defence of all workers and communities by our president at the Durham Miners' Gala. It visibly moved more than 100,000 people. They identified and agreed with Tosh and reaffirmed what we need to do. Thanks, too, to the large contingent of ASLEF members who went to Tolpudde to celebrate the six farm workers transported for coming together to talk about wages and conditions at work until a public outcry got their return. The right to free association is ours, not in the government's gift.

We are standing behind Jeremy Corbyn, Tom Watson and Sadiq Khan for the leadership and mayoral elections. It's sometimes said there is no difference between those at Westminster. Well, Jeremy and Tom are two leaders who think freely and inform the debate with intellect and belief. Sadiq is someone who knows London and its needs. The form for your free right as a trade union member to vote is in this *Journal*. It's your voice; please use it.

Yours fraternally

Mick Whelan, general secretary



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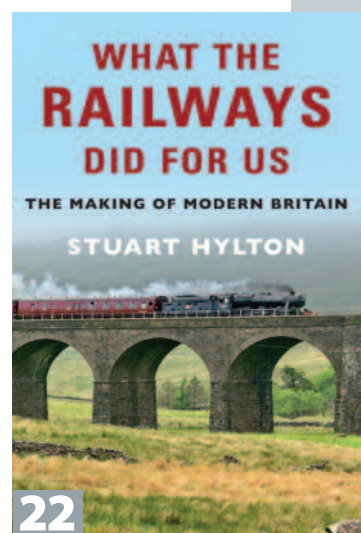
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ABOUT ASLEF

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Train drivers show solidarity with miners at the Big Meeting

DAVE COURT reports from the 131st Durham Miners' Gala held in the city on Saturday 11 July

THE bands and banners began assembling at breakfast, ready for the parade to begin at 8.30am, through the streets of Durham to the rally at the racecourse, with the customary stop outside the County Hotel. I was fortunate enough to stand for a while on the balcony along with ASLEF's general secretary Mick Whelan, president Tosh McDonald, and District 4 Organiser Nick Whitehead. There was a strong contingent of EC members and DOs in Durham, including Hugh Bradley and Howard Kaye; Brian Corbett, Dicky Fisher, Nigel Gibson and Kevin Lindsay.

At the racecourse there were trade union stands, fairground rides and mobile food outlets and tens of thousands of fellow trade unionists, their families and friends, and a field adorned with trade union banners. Dave Hopper, general secretary of the Durham Miners' Association, introduced Labour leadership contender Jeremy Corbyn who spoke about the pitfalls of rail privatisation, the labour movement from the general strike to the present day, and the Tories' attack on union rights, the welfare state and the NHS, and the need for solidarity in the fight against this onslaught.

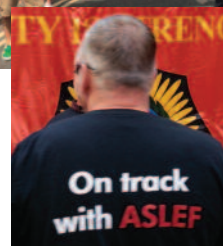
Next up was our president, Tosh McDonald, who began by reminiscing about when he



started on the railway, back in 1979, as a freight guard when most of his work was coal traffic. In an excellent speech, which got a standing ovation, he said it was wrong that DB and Abellio, German and Dutch state railways respectively, use profits from the Scottish and Northern franchises to subsidise fares and operations in their own countries. He spoke about the movement of coal to the energy companies and the threat of redundancies for footplate staff in the FOCs. Tosh finished by talking about the Orgreave Truth & Justice Campaign, the long connections between ASLEF and the NUM, and the need for solidarity in the labour movement in the coming weeks, months and years.

We also heard from Matt Wrack of the FBU, Raymundo Navarro Fernández of the CTC in Cuba, Chris Keates of the NASUWT, the journalist and author Owen Jones, Marcos García, first secretary at the Venezuelan embassy in London, and Len McCluskey of Unite. The banners were then blessed at Durham Cathedral – a yearly ritual.

The Big Meeting was, once again, a big success. And, from our point of view, a second year of pride in ASLEF. Last year Mick spoke from the podium and this year it was Tosh – a first for any trade union to deliver two consecutive presentations at the Durham Miners' Gala.



On track with ASLEF: activists were out in force at one of the high points of the labour movement year

A Poke at the Night Tube



Night Tube but not quite what TfL had in mind

The Poke website, which trades as 'time well wasted', wasted no time in poking fun at London Underground's over-hyped but under-negotiated 24 hour Night Tube service: 'The finalised map for London's night-time service has been revealed. Here's how most people will experience it.'



Head office nailed its colours to the mast – well, we put the posters in the windows – showing our support for Jeremy Corbyn, Tom Watson and Sadiq Khan in the elections for leader and deputy leader of the Labour Party and candidate for Mayor of London.

QUOTE...

'I hated Margaret Thatcher with a passion. I hated her so much when she was alive I set my alarm clock an hour earlier than I needed so I could hate her for an hour longer.'

– Tosh McDonald

...UNQUOTE



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HOWARD'S WAY

Howard Kaye has been re-elected unopposed as executive committee member for District 5. Howard, 52, a driver with Virgin Trains East Coast, was first elected to the EC in September 2012. 'I'd like to thank all those branches who have shown their confidence in me,' he said.

MARCHING IN MEMORY

On Saturday 15 August activists in south Wales will march to mark the anniversary of the Llanelli railway strike in 1911. 'We assemble at Llanelli railway station at midday to march to the town centre and then to the cemetery where the two young men shot dead by soldiers are buried,' said Sian Caiach.



Education is not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire

Mick Whelan opens the New Learning Centre at Birmingham New Street (left) and

then smiles for the camera with ASLEF Education project workers Mike Tansey,

Julie Rutter, Alan Reid, Emma Penman, Ian Beckett and Shirley Handsley.



CONFERENCES

The **Burston strike school** rally is at Burston, near Diss, in Norfolk on Sunday 6 September. The **Trades Union Congress** is at the Brighton Centre from Sunday 13 to Wednesday 16 September and the **Labour Party** conference is at the Brighton Centre from Sunday 27 to Wednesday 30 September. The **Scottish TUC** is from Monday 18 to Wednesday 20 April 2016 at the Caird Hall, Dundee.

Off the rails



THE NEWS that Elizabeth Windsor is plundering the public purse again has irked ASLEF's president. 'Good pay rise for the Queen, who does nowt,' muttered Tosh McDonald. 'So what should the workers get?'

HOUSE of Windsor is a relatively recent (and entirely artificial) invention. After the royal houses of Plantagenet, Lancaster, York, Tudor, Stuart, Orange and Hanover it was Saxe-Coburg-Gotha (an Anglicized version of Sachsen-Coburg und Gotha) until George V changed the family name, by royal proclamation, to Windsor because of anti-German sentiment during the Great War.



ASLEF's Tosh McDonald



Wizzard's Roy Wood

TALKING of Tosh, GMB organiser Peter Davies confessed: 'I tweeted a picture of you on telly and comment about you being a busy man. Dan Johnson of the BBC replied asking if you would no longer have time for the Wizzard reunion.'

500 CLUB: N Henstock, with number 61, won the July draw, scooping the RMS prize money jackpot of £370.



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The **UK** train drivers' union

Holly came from Miami, FLA

LUCIO BUFFONE, District 7 delegate, reports on the TUC's LGBT conference

T HIS year's TUC Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender conference took place at Congress House in London on 25 and 26 June. This was my first conference as an ASLEF delegate and I'd like to thank the branches that nominated me.

Most of the big debates in the LGBT community have been settled by consensus over the years and, as a result, there were very few contentious issues. Motions on organising LGBT workers, bullying, discrimination, mental health, issues affecting LGBT youth, and homophobia in football were all debated, and passed, normally unanimously.

ASLEF's motion about tackling the high risk of homelessness among young LGBT people was passionately proposed by Angie Geddes-Smith and highlighted

how the government's unfair housing policies have adversely affected vulnerable young LGBT people, especially those whose coming out has led to a breakdown in family relations. ASLEF also seconded a motion by the Musicians' Union about the closure of LGBT venues. I highlighted some of the many venues – such as the Black Cap in Camden and Madame JoJo's in Soho – which have closed in London in the last year alone. Venues which support live music and cabaret are under particular pressure as demand for housing means developers would rather turn them into flats. I spoke about the campaign to save Britain's oldest gay bar, the Royal Vauxhall Tavern, which has been sold to an overseas property developer. A day after my speech, the *Evening Standard* reported that London



Angela Geddes-Brown, Katie Cooney, Lucio Buffone, Julie Clegg and Darran Brown

Mayor Boris Johnson has thrown his weight behind the campaign; he was obviously following proceedings at our conference very closely!

There were a couple of areas of contention and one was about working with Stonewall on its workplace equality index. Maria Exall of the CWU pointed out that unions organise workers to collectively protect our interests, while corporations may try to create an environment that appears superficially friendly to LGBT people – a pink wash – and

use any award to prevent democratic collective organisation. Another was a Society of Radiographers motion on support for young trans people. Some trans delegates felt the motion promoted a victim culture among trans people, but others rejected this and the motion was carried.



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The **UK** train drivers' union



Whatever you do take Pride

JAMES SUTHERLAND,
Bletchley's branch
equality rep, reports on
London Pride

THE LGBT committee worked hard to ensure ASLEF took pride of place in London on Saturday 27 June. This year marked a special act of solidarity as it's 30 years since the formation of Lesbian & Gays Support the Miners, one of the first groups outside the labour movement to support the NUM during the bitter strike of 1984-85.

To mark the occasion, LGSM reformed to march with NUM branches and the Tredegar brass band. The history surrounding trade union involvement with LGBT equality issues stems from this time; to show their gratitude for LGSM support, the miners ensured a motion was passed at the 1985 Labour Party conference to address equality issues.

Bletchley branch members, family and friends stepped off the train at London Euston to be greeted by glorious sunshine. Walking to our rallying point on Baker Street, we were met with a mélange of groups who would be marching with us. Trade unions, LGBT groups, sports clubs and niche interest groups all making their way to their rallying points and the atmosphere was bubbling.

Our LGBT committee had been busy ensuring we had enough flags, whistles, vuvuzelas and specially commissioned tee-shirts for all who turned up. The turnout was fabulous, around 80 marching with ASLEF, including partners, children, friends and family. Five ASLEF banners were held high, the march being the first outing for the new LGBT committee banner. The Women's Representatives Committee, District 6, District



ASLEF activists - young and old - take pride in marching through London

7 and King's Cross branch all brought banners, too. Such a tremendous turn out is testimony to our union's commitment to its LGBT membership.

Music synonymous with gay culture began to play from the Tredegar town band as we took up position behind the NUM; a fitting tribute to our union's support for the miners 30 years ago. Trade unions were placed in section C, with corporate sponsors, such as Barclays Bank, at the front; a stark sign of the times for another five years. It was absolutely imperative that we, as trade unionists, turned up in numbers to show who the true supporters of equality really are.

And we did! The atmosphere was incredible, with the sound of the brass band, the shrill blasts of our whistles and the howls of the vuvuzelas echoing through the streets of the capital. People stood to watch, and the cries and gestures of support towards trade unions were cheering.

In Trafalgar Square, at the end of the march, the LGSM were waiting to thank those taking part. Not surprisingly, there were no corporate sponsors. They had long ago packed up and gone home; for them, it was just another box

ticked for big business.

This was the first time I had attended London Pride; in previous years I went to events in Manchester and Leeds which are hugely commercialised. But the trade union and activist involvement in London really blew me away!

There are still obstacles to overcome: equal pension rights for same sex couples; the rise of hate crimes; and the reckless apathy towards schools covering LGBT issues as part of the curriculum. But Pride is a demonstration, to show our will and endeavour to work together to ensure the push for equality is never waylaid.



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Die Wacht am Rhein



ASLEF education project worker CHRIS NUTTY reports on a train drivers' visit to Siemens and Volkswagen in Germany

A GROUP of ASLEF members visited the Siemens plant at Krefeld in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany, and the rolling stock manufacturer's test and validation centre at Wegberg-Wildenrath, on the site of an old RAF base.

'It was nice to see the union flag flying and a digital sign welcoming us when we arrived at Krefeld,' said Virgin Trains driver Paul Harnett. 'They gave us a tour of the factory where 2,500 employees are building 600 train vehicles each year, including the new Class 700 Thameslink trains, the DB ICx, with 28m long coaches, and the new Eurostar e320. They will soon start building Class 707s for South West Trains.'

They also have contracts for many other countries such as Russia, Austria and Switzerland. It was interesting to see the different production stages, from a sheet of metal to a completed vehicle.

'Then we went to the test tracks at Wildenrath. There are five tracks, and the main one is more than 6km long which allows



The ASLEF crew get a digital welcome at Siemens (above) and enjoy a little Westphalian hospitality (left)

speeds of up to 160kph. The facility even has tracks configured to Network Rail standards just for testing British trains! We were made to feel very welcome and it was an excellent visit.'

The Siemens trip was part of an educational study tour, organised by ASLEF, to look at manufacturing and transport in Germany. The group also visited the VW car plant in Wolfsburg and the city of Osnabrück, where they were met by the deputy mayor, Karin Jabs-Kiesler, and visited the Felix Nussbaum Gallery. East Midlands Trains driver Chris Wells said: 'Getting to see Osnabrück was great, it's a beautiful city. We were made very welcome by the deputy mayor and Derby's envoy from Osnabrück, Johanna Alka.'

QUOTE...

'John Steinbeck said socialism never took off in the United States because the poor saw themselves not as an exploited proletariat but as temporarily embarrassed millionaires. One needn't take it to that extreme to see the point: a good number of people hope that in the future they, too, will be doing well. The Labour Party should look out for those at the bottom of society but must understand that social class isn't something most people see as fixed.'

– James Bloodworth on the *Left Foot Forward* political blog

...UNQUOTE

Dinna gan near the Seghill mine

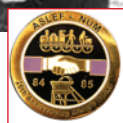


GRANVILLE WILLIAMS reveals the next steps for the Orgreave Truth & Justice Campaign after the police watchdog refused to launch an investigation

AFTER two and a half years of pressure from the Orgreave Truth & Justice Campaign the scoping exercise by the Independent Police Complaints Commission essentially concluded: 'It all happened too long ago and, anyway, we don't have the resources to conduct an investigation.' The decision was not unexpected and the OTJC, at a press conference in the Miners' Hall of the NUM in Barnsley on 12

June, made it clear that now the IPCC has reached its decision the road is clear for us to push ahead with a determined campaign for a full public inquiry into policing at Orgreave.

An early day motion in Parliament sponsored by Ian Lavery, Labour MP for Wansbeck, and former president of the NUM, calling for 'a wider public inquiry, covering not only the policing of Orgreave but of the entire



Police brutally beat striking miners at the Battle of Orgreave in 1984

country during the 1984-85 miners' strike' gained the support of 67 MPs. A model resolution for trade unions and other organisations calling for a public inquiry has

also been circulated. Louise Haigh, MP for Sheffield Heeley, and 60 other Labour MPs, has written to Home Secretary Theresa May asking for an urgent meeting.



Freedom Riders back ASLEF action

ASLEF Joint District Council 2 and 4, along with the Durham Miners' Association, sent a message of support to the South Yorkshire Freedom Riders for their rally at Sheffield station one year after two of them were arrested. Tosh McDonald, ASLEF's president, said: 'In return, they sent their support to ASLEF members on LUL, TPE and Tyne & Wear Metro for our upcoming strikes! Rock'n'solidarity roll!'



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Had Labour listened to ASLEF we'd have had a popular policy

JEREMY CORBYN is one of four candidates – Andy Burnham, Yvette Cooper and Liz Kendall are the others – standing to become leader of the Labour Party. Here Jeremy, who has been endorsed by ASLEF, explains what the party needs to do to win again

LABOUR lost the last election because we didn't put forward a vision that convinced and inspired. We were right to reject the Tory claim that, somehow, our investment in schools and hospitals crashed the economy – but then why on earth did we also accept the need for more cuts? The truth is we never offered an analysis of why the economy crashed in 2008.

Public spending didn't crash the economy, but neither, too, did a few dodgy bankers. The problem was, and remains, deeply entrenched: our economy is not productive enough. The overblown size of the finance sector was a symptom of the deregulated mess created by the Thatcher and Major governments, and continued by New Labour.

SHARED VISION AND INVESTMENT

You know this sharply on the railways. Franchise companies hiked up fares, cut back where they could, and failed to invest. Their sole purpose has been to maximise profit, turning public subsidy and the public's fares into higher dividends. Extracting, but not investing to produce.

A few months ago the Japanese broke the world record speed for a train which ran at 374mph – three times as fast as our intercity trains. That didn't happen by accident. It took shared vision and investment between government and industry. A joined-up industrial strategy that creates skilled, well paid jobs and world class infrastructure in magnetic levitation trains. China is doing the same. Linear motor technology was originally



developed by Professor Eric Laithwaite at Imperial College, London, and like so much not invested in by this country. We make do and mend. We manage decline. We have no ambition or vision beyond short term profits.

the best possible rail policy from Labour at the last election. Labour put forward elements of something that would have gone some way to improving the railways – such as allowing the

○ Mick Whelan, general secretary of ASLEF, said: 'We are supporting Jeremy in his bid to become Labour Party leader because we believe he has the character, the vision, and the policies to deliver for all the people of this country. Jeremy understands what Labour has to do to win back the hearts, the minds, and the votes of ordinary working people in Britain.'

The other week the government announced major cuts to rail investment, including the Leeds to Manchester and Midland main line routes, and I am supporting the campaign by the *Manchester Evening News* to reverse this decision. This is the disastrous legacy of rail privatisation – a government with no vision, no hope and no strategy, because it has outsourced everything to corporate boardrooms that act in their own interest, not in the interest of us all.

CHANCE FOR CHANGE

Surveys show the public wants public ownership of rail – even a majority of Tory voters favour it. Labour needs to pledge to put the industry back together again by reforming Network Rail and not renewing franchises.

Your union worked hard to get



The candidates for Labour Party leader: Yvette, Jeremy, Liz and Andy (left) and Yvette, Andy, Mary Creagh (when she was still in the running) with Jeremy (far left)

us in touch, win us elections and make us strong.

Every union in this country is opposed to the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership – the US-EU trade deal that is a massive power grab by corporations – yet the party leadership is still equivocating. We need to be part of that campaign. Why should people listen to us, if we don't listen to them?

I don't have to tell you as trade unionists, but what wins for us in the workplace is our collective strength, our organisation and ability to mobilise it. Leadership is important, but even the best leadership is worthless if it doesn't bring people with it.

I stood in this leadership election not for any personal motivation, but because Labour must become a social movement again if we are to be successful. Building a coalition that can oppose and resist the Tories now, and then defeat them in 2020.

NEED NOT GREED

This vote is your chance for change. You have the power to change the direction of our party and our country. To build a party you can be a part of, proudly, and to build a country that serves need not greed. If you share that vision, then please register to vote in this election, encourage your fellow ASLEF members to register – and sign up your friends and family, too. Together we can build a movement for change. Be part of it.

○ You can sign up to help Jeremy's campaign at www.jeremyforlabour.com

○ JEREMY CORBYN, 66, has been MP for Islington North since 1983. He is a member of the Socialist Campaign Group and the Labour Representation Committee.

I can hear old number 9 as she goes rolling by



SIMON WELLER, ASLEF'S national organiser, and lead officer for DB Schenker, reports on the state of play

THE duty on coal was increased significantly in April; the generators had been busily stockpiling coal at power stations to avoid paying the increase. But now it's in force coal traffic across the country has come to an abrupt halt. It's a perfect storm as the wholesale gas price has tumbled and power plants have switched to gas. That, coupled with low interest rates, means money is cheap and generators can afford to have huge stockpiles of coal while waiting for prices to change. Generators are said to have larger stockpiles now than during the run-up to the miners' strike.

The tax increase was designed to drive power generators away from fossil fuels. It was obvious what would happen and we repeatedly requested meetings with DBS on the impact of the tariff increase. We also told them not to recruit at coal depots. You can guess their response.

DBS informed us of their intention to make 234 employees redundant, of which 118 would be drivers. The following depots were marked for closure or partial closure. Barking: current headcount 17; proposed headcount 0; proposed surplus 4. Carlisle: 42; 25; 17. Hereford: 9; 0; 5. Hunterston: 14; 0; 14. Ipswich: 11; 0; 6. Longannet: 10; 0; 10. Tyne Yard: 35; 0; 28. Warrington: 73; 62; 11. Worksop: 33; 0; 23. Total: 244; 87; 118.

Company council and I rejected their proposal, which failed to contain a coherent, long term plan for the future. It was an exercise in opportunism; closing depots they perceive to be inefficient, due to their small size, and nothing to do with the decline of coal work.

Geoff Spencer, chief executive of DBS, has outlined his vision of the future and the need to encourage more intermodal work (shipping containers). All well and good but their closure plan means the end of two intermodal depots! So rather than growing the business the message they are sending is one of contraction.

There are significant problems that need to be addressed – the downturn in coal, the proposed closure of Longannet power station, and the switch to gas at West Burton and Cottam – but the DBS plan of wholesale redundancies is not the way to do it. We propose to approach the problems in a structured way with the overriding principle of keeping drivers as close as possible to their home towns, and family life, preferably without the need for house moves. We have

insisted that DBS seek drivers interested in voluntary redundancy at all locations, not just the affected locations. By using a combination of VRS to reduce numbers and merging depots to provide cover and keeping drivers in area we should avoid the need for mass house moves.

We are proposing the merger of Worksop into Rotherham, Doncaster, Toton, Knottingley, and possibly Immingham. There is a possibility of merging Tyne Yard and Thornaby but we feel there is a clear case to keep both depots open, with the option for some drivers to move to the Yorkshire depots. Longannet and Hunterston are the most difficult as there are no depots locally with which to merge. We hope to create vacancies at Millerhill and Mossend, by using VRS, to allow drivers to stay in Scotland. This is dependent on there being enough VRS in Scotland and knowing what the Scottish government's plans are for Longannet power station would be a huge help. It is further complicated by Network Rail's rumoured plan to change the location of



a key ballast stone distribution centre from Millerhill.

We can also move some work around the country to depots that are affected from areas with shortages of drivers. For this to be effective, DBS management will have to challenge some of the historic monopolies of work where local managers have built little empires at the expense of other depots. This short-sighted practice must end. We will address the problems at the non-coal depots (such as Barking, Hereford, and Ipswich) when we receive the long term plan and more considered numbers from DBS. It is not necessary to close these depots; in fact, it is highly undesirable.

We are co-ordinating with DOs and company councils around the country to secure vacancies in passenger franchises and unaffected freight operators for DBS drivers at risk. This demonstrates, once again, the precarious position of train drivers in the freight sector; a slight shift in one part of the fully privatised market results in life changing repercussions. But we are fortunate to have dedicated reps fighting to protect jobs and family life for our members.

One of these days turn that train around



District 5 Organiser NIGEL GIBSON, lead officer for GB Railfreight, Freightliner Intermodal, and Freightliner Heavy Haul, looks at the challenges ahead for freight on rail

IT WILL be interesting to see how Genesee & Wyoming, with the acquisition of 94% of Freightliner for £492 million, take the group forward. Our first impression is that, as a global railway operator, they take a greater interest in the operation of the company than their predecessor, spending time in recent months meeting staff. There appears to be a strong emphasis on the company safety culture which we cautiously welcome. We have been assured by both Freightliner Intermodal and Freightliner Heavy Haul that there will be no changes to terms and conditions or staff numbers as a result of the takeover. With G&W expected to own 100% of Freightliner by

2020, it will be interesting to see how things develop in the UK rail freight market and the industrial relationship with trade unions.

ASLEF has drawn up a code of practice which provides a common aspiration for negotiators to work towards including the length of the working day, facilities for drivers, and improvements to the cab environment.

It is often said that we need to re-examine how we organise our freight membership. With the support of the EC we have trialled regional meetings for GB Railfreight, with specific admin matters such as nominations and reports, but that idea proved less than successful. We have also held open freight

meetings of members at Bristol, Crewe, and Glasgow which were a success. Perhaps this works for sharing information where the focus at the local branch may be less attuned to the specific needs of freight members and we can develop that idea. I was pleased that AAD took on board an idea initiated in District 5 to hold freight specific weekend schools. Branches are, however, central to our organisation and it is only there that members can participate in our democratic processes such as policy changes, industrial issues or nominations for positions.

Our membership is growing month by month in both passenger and freight sectors, but we face many challenges over the months ahead, with significant down turn in freight work, and must do all we can to ensure that jobs are our first priority.

FREIGHT TRAIN FREIGHT TRA

Merry go round
in freight sector**ROBERT SMITH, company
council secretary, reports
on Direct Rail Services**

DRS HAS recently commenced operating peak services on the Fife circle in partnership with ScotRail as part of the company's expansion into TOC support; the new services utilise the Class 68 locomotive and DRS mark 2 coaching stock. Following the successful commencement of ScotRail

services, DRS will also be operating a locomotive-hauled passenger service along the Cumbrian coast in partnership with Northern Rail and the DfT.

The Fife circle services were previously operated by DB Schenker and the transfer from DBS to DRS is an example of the merry go round of contracts in the freight sector. ASLEF and the freight company councils are working hard to ensure that the winning and losing of contracts within the sector is down to commercial competence and not at the expense of the erosion of our working conditions.

Your freight company

councils and ASLEF are busy preparing for the next challenge to our traditional methods of rail operation – ERTMS. This system will be slowly introduced to the network and will involve many challenges to ensure that the system is not only fit for a modern railway but fit for those of us who will use it on a daily basis. ASLEF has been working hard to ensure that the system and associated working rules are fit for purpose. The challenge for company councils, working with FOCs, will be to ensure that the fitment of on board equipment and the driver interface is suitable, practical and safe. This will be especially challenging given the differing age profile of a fleet such as DRS's.

I am pleased to report that DRS are continuing to recruit a mixture of qualified and trainee drivers; this recruitment and training programme is expected to continue into the near future.



Direct Rail Services: operating peak services on the Fife circle

Begging drivers to come in

**PAUL BARBER, FLHH company council
secretary, reports on Heavy Haul**

Freightliner Heavy Haul now has a new owner; at the moment we have yet to see anything different but, after seeing a presentation by the head of safety, I think we will see changes, especially regarding the safety culture. Genesee & Wyoming is a safety-led company so if you feel you have any problems regarding safety or PPE please contact your local manager first, then your h&s rep. The protracted takeover process has meant that many of the items the BC has been trying to push through have been delayed.

As with Intermodal we will shortly see the introduction of noise cancelling headphones; but we have yet to find out where and when we are expected to wear them. After much talking we may finally have a van policy on the horizon. The existing Freightliner van fleet is currently up for MOTs and we have asked for evidence to be placed in each van that Freightliner vans have tax, MOT and a service schedule. If you have any doubts about the safety of the van, don't take it, and tell control. From 1 April there were major changes in the market for coal which led to a



Protracted takeover has led to delays

major reduction in the movement of coal by rail. We have been assured there will be no driver redundancies.

We have recently seen the ending of special on-calls at FLHH. On-calls should now be rostered but some areas have yet to have any drivers shown on-call, leading to controllers ringing around and begging drivers to come in. With pay negotiations on the horizon this just highlights the different local rostering arrangements and conditions we face on FLHH, making any pay deal suitable for all more of a challenge.

We have some vacancies for reps, especially in the north, so if you feel you have plenty to say and want to help others achieve a better job, please put yourself forward. There is excellent support for reps from ASLEF and the BC. Talking on websites or Facebook doesn't change anything; talking direct to management does.



Positive moves

**BARRY HARE, company council, reports
on GB Railfreight**

Start of a new contract year and we are seeing the downturn of coal affecting all FOCs, with GBRF being no exception. The company is working hard with the company council, moving work and front line staff around, and GB is dealing with this downturn in a very positive and proactive manner.

Pay talks have taken place over the past few months with the company council and lead officer Nigel Gibson, and we were pleased to announce a 2.3% increase in salary with a one year, no strings, deal agreed without the need for a referendum. A t&cs review has taken place and is still on going. The company council is working tirelessly to improve t&cs which, at times, is proving difficult.

On the Caledonian Sleeper contract the trade union has worked hard to smooth the way forward for our members TUPed over from DBS to GBRF. It was hard because at times our members were very uncertain of their future in the rail industry.

I'm pleased to welcome 22 drivers from Scotland who have TUPed over to GBRF and wish them a long and happy future working for the company.



Improving t&cs is proving tricky at GB Railfreight

AIN GOIN' SO FAST



Back door Euro bid to sneak in super lorries

PHILIPPA EDMUNDS, manager of Freight on Rail, reports on the secret costs of road haulage

Constant vigilance is needed in the campaign against mega trucks on all fronts, but especially in Europe. Powerful business interests are supporting the spread of these massive machines across Europe because mega trucks will cut costs for the road haulage industry by around 15%. The issue is that everybody else pays the extra costs imposed on society and the economy in terms of road crashes, road congestion, road damage and pollution.

Supporters of mega trucks have been attempting to slip in text supporting cross border mega trucks into the interim revision of the transport white paper using the opaque euphemism of European Modular System.

So I alerted supportive Labour and Green UK MEPs on the transport committee so they could work together to push for the removal of the appropriate wording. Additionally, I contacted Conservative and UKIP MEPs on the transport committee, to try and influence their votes.



Mega trucks are bad for the environment, bad for other road users, and bad for the future of British rail freight

As it stands, problematic amendments with the text supporting EMS have been removed but the person responsible for the revised file, known as the rapporteur, is Dutch and a big mega truck fan, so I will continue to work closely with our supporters in the European Parliament to try to influence MEPs for the vote in the transport committee.

These are the warm up hostilities as the Netherlands, which is hugely supportive of mega trucks, takes over the European presidency from January to July 2016 and is rumoured to be preparing a cross border framework for mega trucks to go on the transport committee agenda. This initiative will be a massive challenge as the Netherlands will be deciding what issues are discussed during its presidency but we have supportive MEPs, including the Green chair of the transport committee who took over from Brian Simpson.

Other files which affect rail freight, such as the combined transport and lorry road user charging directive will be debated next year in Brussels – so watch this space for campaigning actions please.

retirement. Provision of a prayer/faith room – there is already one room in place and Freightliner will look at any further request. Severe weather policy – Freightliner has committed to pay drivers when they are unable to travel to work in severe weather based on its merits.

We are currently in the process of producing a set of road learning norms and core route list for all depots and this will be led by what the local reps tell us. We have a signed agreement on release for all our reps and how the company should be working with us to achieve this release.

As a council we attend a number of freight forums throughout the year

and, at the last one, a 14 point freight conditions code was written up and it will be our task to take these points up with management. There is also an ASLEF best practice policy on taxi/private hire and if any driver has any problems with taxis please report it to control and your local reps. If you ever feel in danger, ask the driver to stop immediately and order another taxi.

Steve Wilson was re-elected and will now have another three year term. On a local level Andy Hourigan has taken over the role as District 3 executive committee member; I have spoken to Andy and he is keen to get to grips on the freight side and I look forward to a long and strong relationship for the future.



Agreement on a severe weather policy in place

Good deal for drivers and now new owners

PETE MASON, business council secretary, reports on Freightliner Intermodal

It has been a busy period for the business council, even without pay talks. On the company side we have new American owners, Genesee & Wyoming. We have been assured that nothing will change on a day to day basis and it is business as usual. We have not had to deal with pay talks due to the three year deal that was agreed, and with RPI being 1.6% in December 2014, the 3.5% we gained was a

good deal for drivers and we are guaranteed 3% in Jan 2016, with RPI at 1% in March.

We have been negotiating on many fronts and the following are responses to AAD items: Employer Justified Retirement Age was put on hold for a while due to two court cases with Virgin drivers but we are pushing for some wording from the company so we can put a referendum to all our drivers about

Cameron's carefully planned attack on the unions and Labour

TOM WATSON is one of five candidates – Ben Bradshaw, Stella Creasy, Angela Eagle and Caroline Flint are the others – standing to become deputy leader of the Labour Party. Here Tom, who has been endorsed by ASLEF, says we can't let the Conservatives set the political agenda

LABOUR lost the election in May and we lost badly. It will take time to learn the lessons of our defeat and to plan a way forward. But there is one lesson we have to heed from the outset. We can't allow the Tories to set the political agenda as they did five years ago, when we last had a leadership election.

In 2010, we let them repeat the lie that it was Labour who caused an economic crash that began on Wall Street. Five years later, David Cameron is using his narrow parliamentary majority to push through policies the country didn't vote for and for which there is not widespread support. The attack on organised labour is one example. Let's not pretend it is anything other than a carefully planned assault on the union movement and the Labour Party. Let's see it for what it is.

IDEOLOGICAL ATTACK

David Cameron's announcement of a Trade Union Bill is a 'reform' looking for a problem. The proposals should be viewed in simple terms: an ideological attack on organised labour. Our party's response should be one of organised and sustained opposition. In the last parliament the Tories removed industrial justice for workers by hiking up tribunal fees. The result was an 83% reduction in equal pay claims and a 91% drop in sex discrimination claims.

In this parliament, they want to take away your industrial voice through changes to political fund regulations. They want to pass new laws on industrial balloting so that some industrial action will be ruled illegal unless 40% or more of those eligible to vote

want to strike. The hypocrisy is shocking! The government got less than 37% of the vote at the last election – far less if you include all those who could have voted but didn't. We have to fight these proposals in parliament and campaign against them in the country.

But Labour needs to do more than oppose. As a party we should also champion the good work unions do and, if I'm elected deputy leader, I will make sure that happens.

COURAGE TO STAND UP

I actually think Labour could win votes in the leafy suburbs of Surrey if we argued for the public provision of rail services again. ASLEF has continued to promote a public debate on the future of rail through organisations like Action for Rail and it is winning the argument. Privatisation has failed. Fares have risen by far more than inflation, trains are overcrowded and there is a chronic lack of staff. It shows what can be achieved when you have the courage to stand up for what you believe in. You will often find public opinion is on your side.

The Tories want to refight yesterday's battles but Labour knows that unions do valuable work in the real world improving jobs, raising skills and helping solve problems. The next deputy leader of the Labour Party must work to ensure the party speaks to a wider range of people in work and that it understands the pressures they are under. We need to have on-going conversations with working people and show we can solve some of these problems together. There's so much riding on this. Greater fairness at work is a crucial



Below: Tom with Anne Western, Ian Lavery, Dennis Skinner, Andy Botham, Mick Whelan, Tosh McDonald and Steve Cavalier at Andy's fundraiser in Matlock earlier this year



building block for a fairer society.

There's a lot we can do, even in opposition. Councils in England calling for devolution should be listening and learning from their Labour colleagues in Wales and Scotland. Progressive and thoughtful procurement policies can help lift standards, but they need to be shared and understood by Labour councillors and others in the public, private and third sectors.

The government might not be interested in the collective work being carried out by Labour councils, unions and employers in Salford and Derby to lift employment standards – but I am.

OSBORNE'S EMPTY BOAST

George Osborne said in his budget that Britain is getting a pay rise, an empty boast that couldn't conceal two truths. The first is that the chancellor is asking public sector workers to take another pay cut, in real terms, by



capping pay rises at 1% for another four years, a proposal I cannot support given the hardship public sector workers have endured since 2010.

The second uncomfortable truth for the Tories is that wages are still less in real terms than they were in 2008. As a former union official I know only too well that collective bargaining is the only real means of ensuring the country get a real pay rise. That is a lesson we all learned long ago and it is one I will never allow the Labour Party to forget.

● You can join Tom's campaign at www.tom-watson.com

● Tom Watson, 48, was born in Sheffield, brought up in Kidderminster, and studied at Hull University. He was political officer for the AEEU. He has been MP for West Bromwich East since 2001. In the last Labour government he served as a government whip, junior defence minister, and Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office. Tom was praised for his forensic questioning of Rupert and James Murdoch at a Culture, Media & Sport Select Committee hearing into the hacking scandal; a subject he tackled in his bestselling book *Dial M for Murdoch: News Corporation and the Corruption of Britain*.

My dog drove the train with me in the second man's seat

Well, that's what they said. TERRY TUITE, a driver with Chiltern Railways who works out of Banbury depot, offers a cautionary warning about what can go wrong when you try and do your company, colleagues and passengers a good turn and there's a Virgin Trains director on board

IT'S the last day of flaming June and I have a day's leave booked to take a nice priv trip down to Littlehampton, or Littledick, as Jim Browne, our Banbury depot h&s rep, says it's known on the Southern. It's Armed Forces Day, there's going to be an air display over the beach, and I have arranged to meet someone with my two springer spaniel sisters, Misty and Katie.

It was a really pleasant day; fish'n'chips on the beach, a giant saveloy for each of the dogs, proud old veterans with chests full of medals and a WW1 artillery display in the arena. At least four generations of my male line were artillerymen; I mucked it up by becoming a train driver! Someone put a photo up in the mess of a loco pushing a big gun with the caption 'Terry's 23.30 off Birmingham Snow Hill' but that's another story for another day.

FIRE HER UP AND LET YOU ON

So what could spoil my day? To get home I ride up to Victoria and the guard and passengers make a big fuss of the dogs. They get more fuss on the Underground and then we get to Marylebone, my home turf, and it's so far, so good. But it's busy there; it's Forces Day, and Pride, and I get a tip from the dispatcher that the 23.15 to Banbury is 'on the top of 6'. Good! It's a four car 165, the air con will work and it will get there!

By this time it's been posted and the platform is getting packed with passengers. They want to get on but there's no driver, the units are all shut down, there's no air, and it's nearly train time. Now I had my train keys on me, because if there were an emergency or a terrorist attack I would be able to assist, as we are supposed to. So I tell passengers close by 'I'm an off duty driver and I'm going to fire her up and let you on.' I took the dogs through the cab into the coach, then started the engines and released the doors. I was half expecting there to be no driver available and I would have worked it had there been a flap in control and a spare lamp and vest available. Plenty of volunteers to look after the dogs and I had not been drinking. But within a couple of minutes a trainee driver turned up, and his instructor was not far behind with his milkshake. There



Play Misty for Me: Tel's dog at the wheel of his Landy (above) as Terry points up the difference in corporate culture between Chiltern and Virgin

wasn't much time between the arrival of their last working and the departure of this one so helping out my Banbury workmates was appreciated. Cab to coach door shut, dogs, me, and more adoring passengers in the coach and the train departs. Only slightly late.

TWO DOGS IN THE CAB

Now Chiltern Railways is different because there is still a bit of goodwill between our control and the drivers but, as I said, what, or who, could spoil things?

The anonymous Virgin Trains director who rode to Banbury on that train, that's who! For reasons best known to him he states in an email to his mate, the MD of Chiltern Railways, that he saw a train driver drive a train to

“ HE SAW A DRIVER DRIVE A TRAIN TO BANBURY WITH TWO DOGS IN THE CAB ”

Banbury with two dogs in the cab! There is, clearly, content in this email that is not just outrageous but libellous, and some of it was read out to my LDC by our manager. But I was made aware of its existence not by official channels, but by the jungle drums at Banbury depot.

The email did the rounds ahead of a witch hunt, so the driver concerned could be sacked. Yes! Fair cop, you got me, one of the dogs drove the train while I sat in the second man's seat with my feet on the desk, reading the *Socialist Worker* as I sipped the contents of a Party Seven through a straw! Furthermore, he complained, that after arrival at Banbury, he followed me and my dogs out of the station to the staff car park where he observed me putting them in the back of my car! Well, at

least he observed that right, and didn't say they were sat on my lap! He noted the registration of my Renault Clio – he must have really hated me by this time! – but I hope he realises that bitches squat to pee and hasn't reported me to the dog warden for not picking up the poop! Shame the ass didn't make himself known.

You can hear the gravelly voice of John Hurt on that Classic fm ad saying, 'To the suited soldiers fighting daily battles in the board room, your reward awaits. PrimeLocation.com.' But the real soldiers with guts and gall were all on parade that day, and the lesser man thought he could end a train driver's career.

NEW BROOM SNEAKS

This has got to stop! All too often these new broom types are sneaking about trying to make a name for themselves by monitoring our every action, waiting for something to report, and then, of course, not reporting the truth! A heavy brake application, ATP warbling in the cab, listening to driver signaller communications, watching the way we conduct ourselves, checking us out on Facebook and downloading trainspotters' photos! With five minute turn rounds how many of us have left reds on the front? 'Ooh, look, Doris, I've got evidence!' The days of the old traction inspector or ex-BR manager having a quiet word are long gone. Most of them have been obliterated and now it's cowardly covert surveillance, even by CCTV, which was used to identify me! Then emails do the rounds to shop a driver, dispatcher or guard, anyone in a uniform! We, as a union, need to stop this. Now!

I like driving trains, I take a lot of pride in it, but there are times now when I think I would have been better employed as an artilleryman, firing a few shells in the direction of Islamic State. But, sadly, at 58 I'm too old for that now...

THE Longsight branch celebrated its 125th anniversary in June with members, retired members and affiliates celebrating at the Waldorf hostelry in Manchester. Formal branch business was kept to a minimum; the vice-chair opened proceedings with a splendid oration to the gathered fraternity, then long service presentations were made to Brother Gary Ormstein (35 years) and the legendary Steve Wilson (40). We presented special Longsight 125 badges to our guests who included former branch secretaries, close friends and comrades from Thompsons and former EC member Terry Clarke, a gentleman of true principle. District 3 Organiser Colin Smith delivered a rousing oration on the history of our proud union and District 2 Organiser Kevin Lindsay spoke about the history of ASLEF north of the border. I



Members in Manchester marking one and a quarter centuries of political and industrial activism



would like to thank Colin, Kevin, EC3 Andy Hourigan, vice-president Dave Calfe, our friends Francine and Jo from Thompsons in Manchester, branch secretary Jim Hopkins who did the bulk of the organisation, and members past and present without

whose loyalty and support the branch would not exist. With formalities finished it was time to put some water in the tank and celebrate in a more informal manner.

Alan Moss, Longsight

Writing on the wall

Here's a happy band of ex-ASLEF officers and members sitting beneath their own sign at the Three Horse Shoes in Ilkeston. Peter Mee had previously had several nameplates made by a metal worker friend, including a replica of Jubilee class Madden as a birthday gift for Sean Madden. So landlord Scott Ryder, at his own expense, decided to recognise his loyal patrons and erect a suitable nameplate in our



Holding court but not in contempt

favourite corner of the pub. Peter, having fired on this Royal Scot in the 1950s, suggested Old Contemptibles as a suitable name, especially coinciding with the centenary of the Great War. The history of this peculiar name was explained to a young Pete after he asked an old driver he had seen saluting

the engine in Camden shed; and a legend of the story is on the wall of the pub beside the nameplate. Scott, from a local mining family, said: 'They're a great bunch of old contemptibles' and Sean added: 'It's a marvellous tribute to the railway workers and the troops.'

Jim Canning, RMS

Upcoming events

CRICKLEWOOD – FRIDAY 18 SEPTEMBER

The next reunion, in memory of Bob Hodson, is at Kidderminster, meeting at 11.30, for a trip to Bridgnorth. Anyone who knew Bob is welcome to join us. Details from Grahame Nash (gwnash.nibs@blueyonder.co.uk).

RAINHAM – THURSDAY 1 OCTOBER

Southeastern retired and working members' reunion from 11.00 at Rainham Social Club, 86 Station Rd, Rainham, Kent.

● Please send your branch news and photographs to journal@aslef.org.uk



Tony, Alan and Les of the RMS go all Posh in Peterborough

Going down fighting

Greetings from the flatlands! It's been quite some time since Peterborough branch had anything worth reporting; all our reps have been going about their branch business with the quiet efficiency that often goes unnoticed, so it was a pleasure to have a break from the norm and welcome a delegation from the RMS. Tony West opened proceedings with a detailed report on the work of the RMS and the NPC, reminding us all that

despite our youthful enthusiasm we are all pensioners in waiting. Other reports were provided by Brian Tagg and Alan Taylor. It was a pleasure to be in the company of these dedicated servants of the trade union movement. That is why the Tories despise organised labour; even in retirement these guys are still fighting for the rights of others, they just won't go away! Bro West presented long service awards to Alastair Cowin, Nigel Walls and Barry Hare. Retirement medallions, certificates and defamation of character were presented to Geoff Kerwin and Mick Ryan.

Simon Bell, branch sec.

New Cross Gate is a relatively new depot, and branch, but we have a few seasoned members. Here's Tony Waters, LLC rep, receiving his 35 year badge from GS Mick Whelan. Jim Titchener, branch secretary



Up the junction at Crewe

RMS committee members Tony West, Alan Taylor, Les Muir and I accepted an invitation from Crewe where we were welcomed by branch chair Robin Ashcroft, secretary Trev Murfin, company reps Pete Mason and Ian Dickinson (Freightliner) and Keith Morum and Mark Wyche (London Midland). We explained what we do and why we do it and enjoyed a very good meeting.

Peter Smith, RMS



Tony joins the team for the traditional picture

Riding for Russ

Eleven of us did a sponsored bike ride from Sheffield to Cleethorpes in memory of the late Russ Bramhall, a career railwayman for 30 years and much respected ASLEF rep. We cycled



Legs eleven from Sheffield to Cleethorpes: Next up le Tour de France

74 miles for the Sheffield Hospitals

charity, there for him in his time of need.

Phil James, Cleethorpes

200 years loyal service



Ray Jackson, RMS chair, committee members Alan Taylor and Les Muir and I attended the annual reunion at Tonbridge on 2 July where Alan Cook, Bill Collins, Mick MacMillan and John Weller were presented with their 50 year medallions, which adds up to 200 years of loyal service to the union. Many thanks to branch secretary Colin Pratt and Dave Weddle for organising the event. These functions cost to put on and the raffle helps raise funds for this so, when the tickets come round, dig deep!

Peter Smith, RMS

Joe Crean, who began his railway career in 1975 at Buxton, and has worked at both freight and passenger companies, picked up his 40 year badge from EC3 Andy Hourigan. In his current role as an instructor at



TPE he is helping to develop new drivers.

C Thompson, chair, Manchester Piccadilly

Clacton would like to say a big thank you to EC5 Howard Kaye and DO Nigel Gibson for attending to present six drivers with their badges: A Gordon, R Beeson and R Yenson (30); T Baxter (25); R Parker (10); and R Barton (5). Andy Gordon, Greater Anglia company council

At the going down of the sun



Crew on le Shuttle get ready to remember the fallen

Members of both ASLEF and the RMT from Ashford train crew social club with their families visited war graves in Flanders on Sunday 5 July. At a poignant Last Post ceremony at the Menin Gate memorial to the missing in Ypres, Belgium, driver Mark Hardie laid a wreath on behalf of ASLEF members while Vic Horwood laid a wreath for the RMT in memory of all the railwaymen killed during the Great War.

Robert Kilkie, Ashford



Mick Holder looks back to August 1915 and life on the iron road

WAKING UP THE SLACKERS

'Brother Gamble was the first speaker, his subject being the rising progress of our Society,' reports the Wigston branch secretary. 'It was pleasing to hear we had reached somewhere near 34,000 members, with a capital of something like £200,000, which is a credit to all concerned.' Plaistow branch, though, complains: 'Of late attendance has been far from satisfactory. The committee meeting was called to find reasons attaching to the non-attendance of members, and a solution of the difficulty. I regret having to make this statement on behalf of the branch, but it is necessary, as a little waking up of the slackers brings to their minds the position they are standing in, and how much hard work they put on the shoulders of their fellow members who are regular in attendance.'

FOUR PACES FROM THE RAIL

Organising Secretary H Parfitt says lessons about level crossing safety need to be learned. 'I was attending an inquest into the death of Mrs Sarah Ferris, 68, knocked down and killed by the engine of a passenger train on a level crossing near Ross, two of our Cheltenham members being on the engine. It was proved that the driver whistled and did all that *could* be done, but as the wicket gate from which the unfortunate woman came on the line is only four paces from the rail there was no chance to save her. The verdict was accidental death, but there was a rider calling the company's attention to the necessity of better arrangements being made at this crossing for the safety of pedestrians.'

SALES OF THE LOCO JOURNAL UP

The editor reports on a competition to increase sales: 'First prize, 12s 6d, goes to Newport, for an extra sale of 152 *Journals* in six months, and a permanent increase of 31 copies. Second prize, 5s, is won by Sandhills, with an extra 138 copies, and a permanent increase of 41.

LAST OF THE HORSE TRAMWAYS

'The last of the horse tramways of London is shortly to be removed, London County Council having decided to electrify the tramway running from Tower Bridge Road to Rotherhithe.'

DEREK (DEL BOY) RICKARD OLD SCHOOL RAILWAYMAN

It is with great sadness that I report the passing of railway legend Derek Rickard after a brave battle with cancer. Derek began his railway career in 1962 at Hither Green as an engine cleaner. He was part of the transition from steam to diesel before transferring to Eastleigh motive power depot as a starred man in 1971. Derek passed as a driver in 1976, eventually obtaining his driver's position in 1986. When Eastleigh passenger depot closed in 1995 he moved to Bournemouth and then in 2002 to the new Siemens train care facility at Southampton Northam. He retired in 2007.

Derek was a conscientious old school railwayman who didn't mince his words when something needed to be said. He was a loyal member of ASLEF and involved in the 1982



Del Boy and Fast Al: friendships forged through the railway family

flexible rostering dispute. He was known for his tea drinking exploits, regularly walking into a mess room with an empty cup looking for a brew, but rarely offering to make a pot himself.

I spent many a happy hour with Derek and his best mate, Allen Taylor, as their second man travelling the Southern Region from Ripple Lane, Temple Mills and Willesden to Weymouth, Westbury and Didcot. They had vast route knowledge and that's how we second men learned the ropes.

Del Boy and Fast Al worked and socialised together as well as car sharing when both were based at Bournemouth. On one famous holiday they were interviewed by a TV crew while lying on the beach in Spain when they were both booked late turn that day! Their friendship was a privilege to witness, formed through the railway family, that is sadly disappearing in today's greedy privatised railway.

He leaves behind his loving wife Diane, children Michelle and Antony, daughter-in-law Emma and granddaughters Bethan and Sophia.

Alan Loughlin, Southampton Northam

IVOR SMITH ROUTE SCHOOL

Ivor Smith died on 16 April at the age of 87. He had been ill following a stroke last November. Ivor was a Great Western man working at St Philip's Marsh and Bath Road depots. He progressed through the ranks as cleaner and fireman and was promoted to driver in 1956. Towards the end of his career he worked at Bristol route school teaching drivers the finer details of the old BR Western Region. Ivor was a loyal and active member of Bristol branch until he retired and held many positions, including auditor and trustee. He was a very popular man and will be much missed by his family, children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and former workmates.

Bernard Kennedy, Bristol

DON RUSSELL DREAMS OF STEAM

Don Russell, a quiet but very popular member of Bedford's train crew, on steam, diesel and electrics, has passed away after a short illness. Like so many he felt the heart and soul went out of the job with the end of steam; but it was too late to start another career. He loved playing the bandit in the mess room, waiting for the jackpot. In retirement, he was often in Wetherspoons at lunchtime with his wife enjoying a drink and a snack.

Bill Davies, Retired Members' Section

ALBERT COOK WELL LOVED BY ALL WHO KNEW HIM

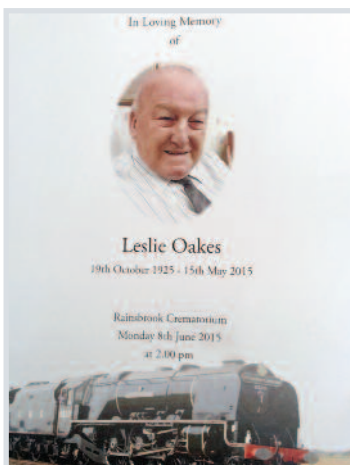
Albert Cook was born in 1928 and followed his father George onto the footplate in 1943. I had the good fortune to know Albert, and he would send me home with questions when I was going up for my rules to become a passed fireman. If I did not have the right answer the next day he was not a happy man! Albert was a dad and did good well loved by all who knew him.

Dave Pizzie, Retired Members' Section

LES OAKES REMEMBERED

Les Oakes (1925-2015) passed away on 15 May aged 89. Les joined the railway at Lancaster in 1940, later moving to Rugby. He was active in the branch for 43 years, on the branch committee, and trades council, and serving as assistant secretary and chair. He was also auditor and trustee of the welfare committee, and LDC rep for 16 years. Fondly remembered, and well respected, for his forthrightness and unswerving principles to the cause of trade unionism. Les retired in 1990 and each year attended the welfare social reunion at Rugby.

Tony Venson, Rugby



Les: famous for his forthright views

MIKE HUGHES

Mike Hughes, my father-in-law, was a union rep on Hereford trades council for several years and a train crew manager, driver instructor and traction inspector at Carmarthen. He sadly passed away on 5 June aged 59.

Mike, a wonderful man, was a thoroughbred Welshman who could describe each route



Mike was a thoroughbred Welshman

by station and turn! He was cremated in Llanelli on 23 June.

Steve Foster

KEN RUDGE

Ken Rudge passed away on 2 June at the age of 86. When Ken left school, like a lot of his generation, he did national service. He chose the Royal Navy and then joined the railway in the late 1940s. Ken was a Great Western man, starting as a cleaner and progressing through the ranks to fireman and eventually driver, working at both St Philip's Marsh and Bath Road. Ken, who took early retirement in the run-up to privatisation in the 1990s, was very fond of Al Jolson and had a very good singing voice, often getting up on stage at the Royal British Legion and giving a very good impersonation of his hero.

Bernard Kennedy, Bristol



Ken: In the Navy

MALKY KENNEDY THE BOTHY'S LOST ITS SOUND

It is with great sadness and a heavy heart that I inform you of the death of our dear friend and colleague Brother Malky Kennedy who passed away suddenly on 8 May on holiday in Spain. He was 57. A great friend and gentleman, a railman for 38 years, a train driver for 22 years, Malky started his career at Salkeld Street in Glasgow, progressing as a guard at Bridgeton depot before it closed in 1986, then moving to Yoker and becoming a driver in 1993. Malky lived life to the full and loved nothing better than attending gigs with friends and catching up over a beer or two. Malky was a well-read man, with great knowledge of books and music, particularly the Beatles and the blues, and would chat away on any subject. He will be fondly remembered for the tales he would tell in the bothy, his audience waiting on the punchline like a dog waiting for a stick to be thrown. The outpouring of grief from workmates and friends for Big Malky shows the high esteem in which he was held. It's a great loss to all who had the pleasure of knowing him. As one of our members said, 'He's a big loss to those who were yet to make his acquaintance.' Our thoughts at this sad time are with his partner, daughters and grandchildren. May you rest in peace, my dear friend, we will never forget you.

Alan Reid, Yoker



Malky: dust another story down

Blues for Malky

Ahv Peronis lined up like sodgies,
Booked aff, the bothy's lost its sound.

Peronis lined up like little sodgies,
Ahv booked aff, bothy's lost its sound.

Rain gathers after laughter,
So dust another story down.

Alastair Kristofferson

PETE BINGHAM SWAMP DONKEY

Our Brother Pete Bingham died on 11 March at the age of 51. Pete began his career at Barrow Hill in 1980 before moves to Derby and Toton where he progressed to driver in 1988. His final move was to Nottingham in 1997 where he became a highly respected driver instructor who was always there to help or chat, whether it be work, his love of music, or real ale! Pete was an exceptional character with a physical fitness to match and would jump at any opportunity to sign up to challenges and encourage others to join him as he raised money for various charities. He did Survival of the Fittest, the Three Peaks Challenge, and the 100k Death March, among many others. This legacy goes on through the Swamp Donkeys who continue to raise money for the Ashgate Hospice where Pete finally succumbed. He will be greatly missed. RIP big fella.

Andy Jones, Nottingham



Pete: the legacy lives on



ERNIE SIGSTON BRYLCREEM BOY

Ernie Sigston, an Old Ripple Lane stalwart, who did his national service in the RAF with the Brylcreem Boys, developed a passion for military aircraft and those involved in World War II. Rumour has it that Ern used to don his flying boots, leather jacket and white scarf in the confines of his front parlour and watch films like *633 Squadron* and *Reach for the Sky*. When he left the RAF he joined the railway at Stratford on the steam and then Ripple Lane

until it closed. He held various posts on the LDC and became branch chair. When we had our open day that nearly never happened it was Ern who got a scaffolder friend to rebuild the platform the big storm had damaged so the DMU shuttle service from Barking to the depot could run. His accolade was naming 37894 Ripple Lane. Ern was a master hamster breeder and went on to breed budgies. He was top of the tree, a leading

authority, and exhibited and judged all over the world. He had two sons by his first wife and did the worst shifts at the depot so he could take them boxing and swimming. He married Terri in 2002 and took on a new family. He gave up the birds and went on the horses where he tried – and succeeded – in giving the bookies a run for their money. Our condolences to Terri and family and sons Paul and David.

Cliff Blackwell, Tilbury

KEN DAVIES RAILWAY STORIES

It is with great sadness that I report the passing of retired driver Ken Davies aged 85.

Ken started as a cleaner at Edge Hill in 1946. He passed out for driving at Speke before transferring to Birkenhead.

He was at Liverpool Exchange when it closed in 1976 and then moved to Kirkdale where he retired in 1991.

Ken was a passionate and professional railwayman, loved everything to do with railways right to the end. Most weekends you would find him on a steam rail tour or preserved railway and on his very last day was returning home from visiting the East Lancs Railway when he was taken ill and suffered a stroke.

Ken had a brilliant memory and, with his Scouse wit, would keep you entertained for hours with railway stories.

Steve Howard, Paddington

JOHN WILKINSON THE GODFATHER

Every seat at Charing crematorium was taken, with many more standing, for a final farewell to retired Ashford driver John Wilkinson (1932-2015) on 29 June. John was more than a driver; he was a traction inspector and instructor who spent most of his retirement doing charitable work for the Friends of the William Harvey Hospital.

He encouraged many youngsters to the driving grade and was seen by them as the Godfather. His friendly face will be sorely missed.

Robert Kilkie, Ashford RMS



John: a friendly face



We welcome letters, either by email to journal@aslef.org.uk or by Royal Mail to **ASLEF Journal at 77 St John Street, London, EC1M 4NN**. Each month the writer of our **star letter** wins a rich range of ASLEF regalia.



Harmonisation is hot topic

We live in challenging times on the western region. FGW promises a railway for the 21st century. But will we all keep our jobs to enjoy the changes or be forced to work to 19th century terms and conditions to pay for it? Harmonisation is the hot topic at the moment. FGW presides over three business sectors, each with a set of drivers on different pay and conditions. This is wrong and must be addressed. It is only right that drivers receive the same rate of pay for doing the same job.

But we need to be careful how we try to achieve this. At all costs, we must avoid the race to the bottom that has destroyed so many industries in the UK. FGW is not a charity and management sees harmonisation as the perfect opportunity to save large amounts of money. The biggest savings can be realised through changes to t&cs, cutting staff costs by reducing driver numbers. The more productive we allow them to make us, the fewer drivers are required; work twice as hard and they need half the staff!

Let us continue to fight, as trade unionists, to improve pay and conditions and bring about equality. But not at the expense of drivers' jobs or by playing into the hands of management. Generous pay and conditions are no use to those who are no longer employed. FGW offer many excuses why they don't have the funds to meet our aspirations. Frankly, that's their problem and it's not up to us to solve it for them.

JN Grant, Paddington

Out of step with electorate

I always read the Letters pages in the *Journal* with interest and have to comment on Tom Burns (*Journal*, July) who wishes to blame Blair, Mandy & Co for Labour losing the election. We as trade unionists voted in a left-leaning guy who, with the help of the right-wing press, was out of step with the electors. So we have to accept Labour losing is totally our fault.

I consider myself as Labour-lite. My wife worked until she was knocked down and became disabled, my ex-brother-in-law, who I consider fully fit, left school, claimed depression, then back problems and, at the age of 49, has never worked a day in his life, yet gets the same benefits. Sorry, I don't think that's fair. I feel benefits should reflect what you have paid in. I accept there are areas of the country where there is no work, but where

GREYRIGG EIGHT YEARS ON TIME TO RETIRE AND RELAX

I was the train driver involved in the Grayrigg derailment eight years ago, in which I was seriously injured. I am writing to the *Journal* as, after 36 years on the railway, I have decided to retire. My decision was mine alone and is mainly due to my injuries deteriorating slightly but the decision was fully supported by my company, Virgin West Coast, and ASLEF. I would like to thank everyone at ASLEF from individual colleagues to the general secretary for all the support over the years. It was a difficult time for my family and me but all the help got us through it. I am not going to name individuals with one



Iain with Jan on the road to recovery

exception which is Colin Smith. Colin was at my hospital bed within 24 hours of the accident and has remained a firm support and friend since then and, in fact, helped arrange my retirement a few weeks ago. He has helped solve many problems for me over the years. I would also like to thank Thompsons solicitors in Liverpool who dealt with the legal

side with great professionalism. I was also lucky to have the support of a strong band of family and friends, especially my wife Jan who gave me 24 hours care for eight months. The support of Virgin West Coast was also fantastic and they were able to find me a suitable role to keep me working. When the chips were down for me ASLEF were there to help in many ways and I think myself lucky to be a member of a great union at a time of crisis. It's been great being a train driver but now it's time to retire and relax and let the train take the strain.

Iain Black, Polmadie

there is work you should take a McJob, but it should pay a living wage. Labour has always been about the working man, taking pride in a day's work. As to Ernie Whitfield (*Journal*, July) I agree with PR, but that would have put UKIP in third place in England.

Simon Jackson, Tonbridge, Kent

Voters said 'No' to PR

Ernie Whitfield (*Journal*, July) argues that because the Tories won the general election with less than 25% of the vote, our first past the post system must be changed for 2020. The Tories will never change a system which guarantees them power to one that, at best, would give them a share of power. In 2011, as part of the coalition agreement, they held a referendum and 19.1 million men and women voted (a 41% turn out) on changing our system to proportional representation. The result? Yes: 32.1%. No: 67.9%. The only time the

Tories go on about voting percentages is in trade union ballots, either for industrial action or the election of a general secretary. Our parliamentary system is based on seats, not percentages of voters.

Stan Godwin, former EC member for District 8

Message to management

Brother Smith (*Journal*, June) raises issues in regard to rostering agreements and practices at ScotRail. Whilst I agree it is damaging for drivers and management to break these agreements I must take exception to the tone of the letter. The truth of the matter is that, despite repeated requests, many ScotRail drivers cannot gain access to updated documents such as DRI and rostering CoP. This can make it difficult to challenge requests/orders from management. The quicker all drivers are provided with these

ON HIS BIKE TO BLICKLING

I had the pleasure to attend AAD in Southend earlier this year to give my annual report on the state of the Railways Pension Scheme. I would like to say a big thank you for the warm welcome.

Furthermore, when the chair mentioned I was doing a sponsored cycle ride in aid of the British Heart Foundation I was inundated with delegates, visitors and officers who contributed most generously, boosting my fund by £200 on the day. Thank you! I feel very



Dave at Blickling Hall, at 7 miles up, and at the end with a pint of Adnams



humble and proud of our fraternity.

I did complete the 50 miles in somewhat wet and windy conditions

but was spurred on by such generosity and support.

Dave Tyson, Norwich, Norfolk

documents, and perhaps a reason why they've been unavailable for so long, the better for all of us.

Brother Smith says that for 18 months crew plan have been playing fast and loose with these agreements. Surely that is the real issue here? Management are deliberately breaking agreements, giving drivers the chance to follow suit, with no repercussions! If ever there was a case to go into dispute then an ongoing flagrant disregard for collective agreements must be it!

This brings me onto my final point. To describe fellow ASLEF members as parasites is an absolute disgrace that will only divide our members. This is the type of language used by the *Daily Mail* or Tories to attack the trade union movement and serves no positive purpose in building solidarity throughout the workplace. What we need is full and open access to our t&cs alongside a steely message to management that we expect them to abide by agreements.

Steven Nimmo, Edinburgh

Sundays in working week

Having just read the June edition of the *Journal* I'm writing to get across my huge disappointment regarding AAD voting for the agenda item to pursue a high profile campaign to promote Sundays in the working week. The quote by Mick Whelan saying it's to help youth unemployment is laughable. My TOC has been understaffed for the last six years, leading to hundreds of cancellations and delays, with management begging staff to work rest days and offering financial incentives on top of rest day pay to get the wheels turning. Where was your youth unemployment concern then? I don't get that much time to see my family either with our

unsociable hours, sometimes not seeing my kids for a week when on late shifts, so the fact I can say 'No' to working Sundays means I get one day when I get to do what I like and there's no waiting for the mark up to dictate my life. We're not stupid, AAD, so tell the truth: you want more subs paying members. You should ask your members what they want and listen to their replies and stop dictating. You still haven't learnt from Labour's mistakes.

Keith James, Bletchley

Humbled by your actions

In March I was unfortunate enough to become the latest in a long line of victims in ScotRail's prolonged campaign of draconian discipline. Mitigating circumstances surrounding my refusal to work enforced overtime were disregarded and I was disproportionately disciplined. On appeal, District Organiser Kevin Lindsay succeeded in getting my penance substantially reduced, and due to the overwhelming and unflinching support and solidarity from my fellow drivers at Yoker branch my unfair punishment was expunged. I would like to thank all the drivers for their vociferous support, I was humbled by your actions and deeply heartened by this resounding show of strength and unity.

Paul Morris, Yoker

Mick: His Aim is True

I read the interview with Mick Whelan in *Rail* magazine; it was really interesting, especially him being an Elvis Costello fan who I love myself! Particularly about some of the issues facing the union in making sure staff have a safe number of breaks and there are enough staff for the new services being run.

Francis Field, by email



BATTLE OF BRITAIN Mark Hardie of Ashford branch has produced two badges to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain in 1940. £5 + £1 p&p with proceeds to the Royal British Legion poppy appeal. Order via his PayPal account at mark121hardie@gmail.com using the friends and family option with your name, address and choice of ASLEF or Spitfire badge.



LONGSIGHT badges to mark 125th anniversary. £5 + £1 p&p. Also a bespoke tie at £8 + £1 p&p. Contact Jim

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ISLE OF WIGHT 150th rail anniversary commemorative badge. £4.99 inc post and packaging.

Contact Fratton driver John Glazebrook on 07823 881495 for details.



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BANBURY badge, £5 plus p&p, proceeds to Katherine House Hospice for looking after Brother Chris Farmer during his final months. Contact Jim Browne on 07717 847057.



BLAND ENCOUNTER by Donald Wightman is a comedy novel about risqué encounters on the railways. A donation from the sale of each book will be made to the Royal British Legion and Help for Heroes. Paperback £7.99 ebook £3.95 from www.amazon.co.uk



COWDEN CRASH commemorative badges, price £5, to mark the 20th anniversary of the accident. Contact Mick Green at userg4163@aol.com if you are ex-Norwood train crew.



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payable to Network South East Railway Society, to 100 Whitley Road, Eastbourne, BN22 8ND.

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You do the fighting I'll do the talking

KEITH RICHMOND reviews some of the new books that have dropped on the ASLEF Journal desk

THE railway is such an integral part of the fabric of this nation that it is hard to imagine a country in which the iron road was a new, and rather frightening, creature. But in *What the Railways Did for Us: The Making of Modern Britain* (Amberley, £18.99) Stuart Hylton describes the dramatic impact of public transport on 19th century Britain. Because the railway was both a product, and a driver, of Britain's industrial revolution; an engine of economic growth and enormous social change.

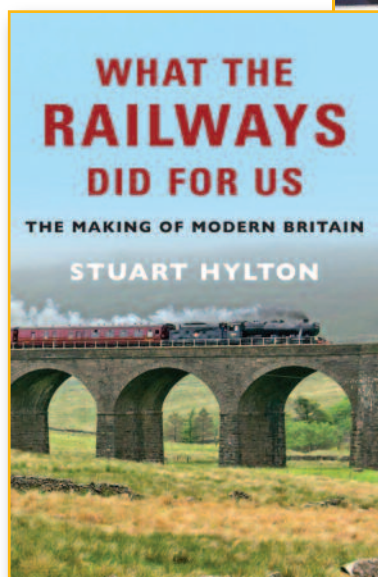
'The railways of Britain have provided an excellent service to millions of people for well over a hundred years,' says Tim Wood, who has worked for Network SouthEast, Network SouthCentral, Connex South Central and Southern. In *Southern Electric Driver* (Capital Transport, £12.95) he offers a captivating first hand account of what it was like to work slam door electric multiple units in the region.

'Books do furnish a room.' – Anthony Powell, *A Dance to the Music of Time*

'I'll tell you what,' David Cameron told Britain's top brass during the NATO air strikes on Libya in 2011. 'You do the fighting and I'll do the talking.' He was gagging military commanders after they complained about political pressure, lack of kit, and low morale. The idea that politicians do the thinking, while the poor bloody infantry do the bleeding, is an oversimplification. Because, while politicians give the order to go to war – with or without levelling with Parliament, and the people, about the reasons why – as the Prussian general Carl von Clausewitz famously said, 'War is the continuation of politics by other means.'

Why We Lost: A General's Inside Account of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars by Daniel P Bolger (Houghton Mifflin, £20) and *The Direction of War: Contemporary Strategy in Historical Perspective* by Hew Strachan (Cambridge University Press, £55) both offer a powerful critique of what went wrong with Western policy, strategy, and tactics in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and Syria under Bush and Blair, Obama and Cameron. And in *Superpower: Three Choices for America's Role in the World*, (Portfolio Penguin, £14.99) Ian Bremmer examines where the United States goes from here.

The Levellers Movement by Peta Steel

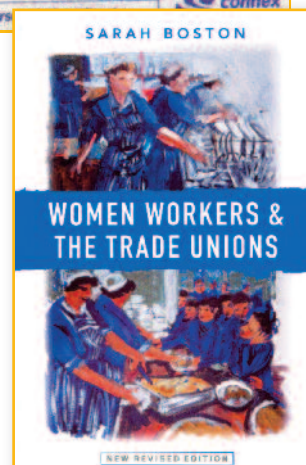
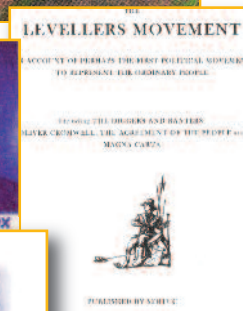
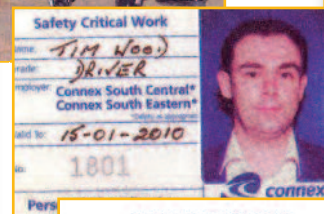
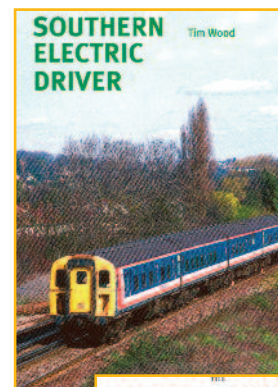


(SERTUC, £2) is, as its cover – with a tip of the head to the political pamphlets and broadsides of the 17th century – makes clear, the story of the first political movement to represent the aspirations of ordinary working men and women, rather than the barons, or the merchant class, in this country. It's the story of the Diggers, the Ranters, and the Levellers; of the New Model Army and the Putney Debates; of Gerrard Winstanley, John Lilburne, and Thomas Rainsborough; of John Milton and Oliver Cromwell.

'Good friends, good books, and a sleepy conscience. This is the ideal life.'
– Mark Twain

In a new edition of her classic study of *Women Workers & the Trade Unions* (Lawrence & Wishart, £20), first published in 1980, Sarah Boston brings the story of women in the workplace up to date. This is a thoroughly researched, and immensely readable, history of the struggle for equal rights from 'their proper sphere at home' in the 1870s through the Equal Pay Act in 1970 to the post-feminist arguments of 'our daughters and our granddaughters' in the 21st century.

Some sports – not golf or bowls, obviously – are as dangerous as they are exhilarating. Speedway, for example. Four men hurtling anti-clockwise around a shale track on 500cc motorbikes, without brakes, sliding around the bends with one boot down on the dirt, over-and-under taking for four laps at speeds of up to 70mph. The sight of close quarters wheel to wheel racing, the smell of the methanol the riders use for fuel, and the roar of the engines



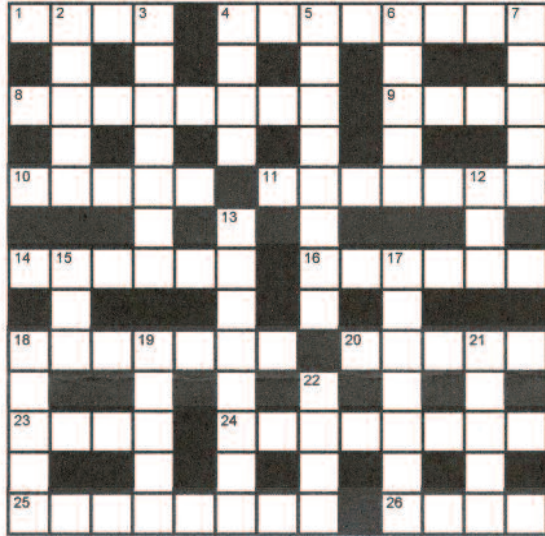
**On the write
lines this
summer on
the sofa, in
the garden or
on the beach**

and the klaxons in the crowd is catnip to Jeff Scott, a pit lane regular as writer, photographer and fan, who in *Born to Rumble* (Methanol Press, £10) recounts some of the rivalries, rows, thrills, spills and fist fights he's seen first hand at tracks over the years.

'So many books, so little time.'
– Frank Zappa

Remember Bob Harris, the Whispering One on the *Old Grey Whistle Test* on BBC2 and late night radio shows on Radio 1? Well, he's *Still Whispering After All These Years* (Michael O'Mara, £20) and still broadcasting an award-winning country music show on Radio 2, too. His autobiography, with a foreword by Robert Plant, is peppered with famous rock'n'roll names, some great late night stories, and a few candid confessions, too. Including the way Matthew Bannister sacked him in 'a less than two minute conversation in his bare, strip-lit office' and the way Bruno Brookes tried to screw him over a loan secured on his home and then tried to take Bob's record collection – 'the tools of my trade' – off him, too. And a lovely handwritten note – spelling mistakes and all – from Marc Bolan of Tyrannosaurus Rex in 1968: 'May your eyes ever shine with happiness, love Marc.'

Prize Crossword number 112 by Zebedee



Solution to Prize Crossword number 111 which appeared in the July edition of the ASLEF Journal

Across: 1 Carrot 4 Prompt 7 Akin 8 Clan 9 Uganda 11 Sheds 12 Rave 14 Alibi 16 Cling 18 Bream 20 Exits 21 Dodo 23 Expel 25 Poteen 28 Veer 29 Pure 30 Dither 31 Octane **Down:** 1 Classic 2 Rhine 3 Twig 4 Pawn 5 Oscar 6 Tinge 9 Usage 10 Asinine 13 Via 15 Ibsen 17 Leo 19 Maltese 21 David 22 Oprah 24 Paula 26 Tour 27 Echo

Congratulations to **Derek Bowler** of **Alvaston, Derby** who was last month's winner.

Across

1 Scottish hill side (4)
4 Type of tree (8)
8 Tropical plant with large brightly coloured flowers (8)
9 Metallic object associated with marriage (4)
10 Part of the UK (5)
11 Known as a 'chook' in Australia (7)
14 A citrus tree from south-east Asia (6)
16 Symbolic object (6)
18 The bass member of the shawn family (7)
20 A book regarded as an authority in its field (5)
23 'When Eight Bells ----' (4)
24 A professor who has resigned from his teaching duties (8)

25 Large, swift, female blood-sucking insect (8)
26 An electrical power cord (4)

Down

2 Indian side dish of yoghurt and chopped cucumbers (5)
3 It's harmful to be seen believing this superstition (4, 3)
4 Blow! It's only one of a pair! (4)
5 Person in shop who is always right? (8)
6 Female equine animals (5)
7 Composer of the *Enigma Variations* (5)
12 Adam's mate (3)
13 Lucky type of clover (4, 4)
15 Yoko ---, widow of John Lennon (3)

17 Court official empowered to carry out a magistrate's decision (7)
18 Collection of cakes, for instance (5)
19 Large pill used in veterinary medicine (5)
21 Bloodsucking insect parasitic on warm blooded animals (5)
22 Group name for quails or larks (4)



The winner of this month's crossword will receive Marks & Spencer vouchers to the value of £25

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Thanks for all your responses to the 111th ASLEF crossword in the July edition. If you successfully complete this month's crossword please send the solution to the Editor, ASLEF Journal, 77 St John Street, London, EC1M 4NN by 14 August

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